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### Interview with Dorothy Bohannon

Cecil B. Currey

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Side 1 - Interview with Dorothy Bohannon at her home, Manila, Republic of the Philippines - 27 July 1985 - page 1

C: This is 27 July 1985 and I am sitting at the home of Mrs. Dorothy Bohannon and the next comments will be by her. You really ought to say something so the next comment will be by you.

B: Ok, let me see. I really don't know where to start with this because it is a little bit on the complicated side.

I came to the Philippines in 1947, and Bo was here before me. He was U.S. Army and he had met Lansdale, I think in 1946 (dog barking--) He mentioned (dog barking)...so why don't we start with that.

C: All right.

B: His story on his meeting Ed Lansdale was, it was a Sunday afternoon, and at that time, see, the CIA headquarters was down on General Sorrano (?)-- General spelled with a G E N E R A L Sorrano (?)--down near the palace. He was working on the jeep which wasn't running properly, so he had it up and his head underneath the jeep and he heard this voice saying in a very demanding tone, I must go to JUSMAAG, in a very severe, very military rough, rough, rough. And he sticks his head up out of the jeep and looks him up and down and says, oh? And he sticks his head back in the jeep and keeps on working. It was Sunday afternoon. Nobody else was around. Everybody was, you know... So this voice spoke again in sort of a vicious sort of a way, and Bo puts his head out again, and he looks him up and down and he says, Oh? or something like that. In other words, not reacting. Now Ed is a very smart guy. He was in advertisement; that was his field. And so he walks away and looks around, apparently to see if there was anybody else around, and nobody else was. So he comes back with a new approach, and he said, you know, I have just arrived from the plane and it is very, very important that I get to JUSMAAG and see these people. He said, they are expecting me. Do you have any suggestions



B: as to how I can get there? Oh, well, says my husband, if you put it that way, if you will just wait a minute or two, I will get this thing, this monstrosity, fixed and I will be glad to take you there myself. So that was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

C: What rank was your husband at that time?

B: He was a Lieutenant and Ed was a Captain.

C: A Captain.

B: He was always just one rank ahead. So Bo took him out, and as I say, that was the beginning of a beautiful friendship. Now I arrived in 1947 and at that time, by then the CIA, see, had taken over the WAC, what had been the former WAC barracks, which was located on Lefondo (?) Street. It was a long, skinny building, 20 feet wide and 100 feet long. Like living in a box car...a whole string of box cars. And we were invited in to dinner at Lansdales. Helen was here and the children were here and they were living in an apartment down near seafront, down near \_\_\_\_\_ (?) Boulevard. So we went to dinner at the Lansdales. But before we went Bo said to me, now listen: You are going to meet Helen Lansdale, and don't get any ideas. If you should act like Helen Lansdale, it is divorce for us. Now, he said, don't you ever conduct yourself like Helen Lansdale. I thought, that's very strange. So, all right, we are going to the Lansdales. And Helen was a person who was a very, very striking person...

C: Premature gray hair, nice features.

B: ...always called it, not a peroxide blonde, but a, what is it, a platinum blonde, and she put blue in it. And later on in life, she put a lot of blue in it. And her eyes were brilliant blue. Beautiful eyes. But she was very straight, with a poker up her back, and slender. A very

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B: striking looking person. Well, we went to dinner and she made it clear that she had not cooked the supper, Ed had cooked the supper.

C: He was the cook even then?

B: Oh, he was the cook even then.

C: I thought that was maybe something he had gotten into later on in life.

B: No, no, no, even then; you know, I admired everything and said, Helen, this is delicious. "I didn't do it; he did it." But whatever Ed said, she already knew it. "Oh, well, I could have told you that. Oh, well I did this and that." Now, Helen...from this point on, we will just talk about Helen. Helen was a person who was always right. She had to be right. She could not be wrong. If there was a stack of books this tall that said the opposite thing, with all the authorities, the books are wrong. She would...if anybody said, opposed her verbally and said, so and so said such and such, if you continued your argument against her, she would turn red. And you could see that red go right up her neck, right up her head; you know, just like with a paintbrush. She would just become furious. And it would just be a small thing that Ed could say, make some remark about something that had happened. "What, who told you that?" It was a very strange thing. Now, Helen, therefore, didn't make too many quote friends in the real sense of the word. Her associates in the Philippines were mostly other wives of the same rank, Filipino (?), who were great at carrying what here is known as "chesmis"(??)--gossip. Now, these wives, many of them, their husbands would run around with other women and people would tell them--so and so is going out with so and so. So they delighted in being able to say, oh, Ed was seen with so and so, and telling Helen, which



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B: would burn her up, you see.

C: So that's at least one reason why when he was gone, like the night of the ambush he came back, she would say, you put those bullet holes in the car yourself.

B: Well, that was just Helen. A typical sort of remark that Helen would make, without any reason. I mean, it didn't have to be any reason behind it. This was just typical of Helen. Um, let me see. What I had in mind... turned off for a minute...

C: It stops...

B: Stops when you stop talking...humm

The first time that I saw Ed and the family was at Hernando Poe's (?). here.  
Hernando Poe (?) was a movie producer. He had a terrific estate over in one section of town. Huge swimming pool. And I don't know how Ed got acquainted with Hernando Poe, but he knew all the top dogs. So we were all invited, all of the intelligence community, Philippine and American and so on, so Helen was there and the boys, the two boys; they were about 7 and 9 at that time. This was in 1947-48. And this beautiful big pool and they had a low diving board and a high diving board and, by God, if those two little guys got up there on that diving board--do you believe that?--high diving board. This is something that I remember, seeing that little guy, little tiny fellow up there on the high diving board--well, it wasn't terribly high; it was about, I supposed, about 12 feet--but 12 feet is pretty high for a little 7 and 9 year old.

C: I'm 52 and I wouldn't do it.

B: And see those two little guys up there on that high diving board. I know one of them; I'm not sure whether both of them went off that high diving board. That's something I remember.

C: Well, think about the (unintelligible) How did they relate to Ed?  
How did he relate to them?

B: All right, let's take the relation to Helen, too. Bo and Ed, now this is talking a number of years later, this would be in the 50's. Ed and Bo. Bo left for Vietnam--no, for Manila (?). This was the Magsaysay days. It started when Magsaysay was still Secretary of Defense. My father had died. My mother was alone in an apartment. Bo's parents were old, and they had lived on the place with three and a half acres of land. And there was Helen alone in Georgetown, in their Georgetown house. This was after a period Ed had written to us and said, I know I'm a heel, but I'm leaving Helen. And then shortly after that, I think he had asked Pat and Pat said, no; said I don't want to hurt anybody. Said it would just hurt us, you know. Pat said, no. So then Ed had a change of heart and he brought Helen and the boys to Washington and established his house in Georgetown. It was an old house, and Bo and I would go down there and we would help scrape and wallpaper the wall and, you know, all that sort of stuff. And this is before they came over to Manila in the Magsaysay days. Bo during this period was also in the CIC school in Bal Harbour (?), and we would come back for weekends to Washington and we would spend much of the weekend at Ed's and Helen's scraping stuff off of the wall and sitting around over coffee talking, making plans. So when Ed and Bo then left for Manila, I was left---Ed said to me, Dorothy, keep an eye on Helen and the boys. So I had a bed in each three houses. I would stay with my mother one day to make sure she was all right. I would go out to Kensington (?), the 3 1/2 acres of land to check them out. And I would go to Helen's. So I was at Helen's about once a week, and I had my own bed there, so I was a part of the family. Helen's relationship with the boys was...she



B: was a very superior person. She was superior to everything and everybody. So the boys were in school by this time; one of them was junior high school and one of them was grade school. And Ted, the oldest, was so full of enthusiasm about things, you know. He was wide-eyed and intelligent and interested in things. And Ted would...at lunch, Ted would say, I found out today that Pikes Peak is so many feet from sea level. And Helen pulled herself up and said, "Hunh, that's nothing. You will find all sorts of things like that to learn in life. That's nothing." And they were always downgrading their kids. Always, you know...but, she was very proud of them, dressed them very well, made them stand up straight; very neat and very clean. Now her attitude toward the boys was: boys are animals. She was raised by a grandmother. She and the sister.

C: I did not know that.

B: There were no boys in her upbringing. And so when she got married that was her first relationship with boys. And boys were different, quote, unquote. (unintelligible) And boys were animals. And one day, I forget what had happened, but I remember very clearly Ted and Pete standing there and Pete said to his mother, "you don't love us. Why did you have us?" And she says, "I have always wondered." You see what a...there wasn't an outgoing love.

C: Ok, how did Ed treat his boys?

B: Pals. He treated them like pals. There was a good relationship. They missed not having him around, of course. When he...his decision to leave Helen, I think the thing that stopped him and made him back off, was the boys.

C: Children can do that.

B: Oh, yes. So...but this sort of a relationship and this blanks, you know: it made a big difference in his life. It was always there in the background. He wasn't getting the cooperation, the added little lifts that he



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B: needed, that would have been so helpful. Now, as I say, she was a-- by this time in life when I was going, hopping from place to place, she was a bitter, bitter person. Our beds were in the same room; it was here and I was there. And she would read her Christian Science, read every night. And she would talk to me. And the bitterness that she had against Ed was incredible. Because of his...I think she believed everything that anybody told her about Ed going around with other women, and he actually, actually did that. It was Pat that....Oh, about Pat. Do you know how he happened to meet Pat? Do you have the story on that?

C: Well, I don't have any real story. She worked in the Embassy, and it was, she worked for/USIS, at that time, and presumably his work brought him in contact with her.

B: That's another story. This started back in '47-'48.

C: That goes back to the period I am talking about. She worked for the Embassy then?

B: She was out at Clark Field.

C: Oh.

B: All right. My husband was CIC. Just after the war, there were lots of Nazis around. There were white Russians. There were all these people hang over from the war. And the object was to see who was the good guys and who was the bad guys. You had to sort out the sheep from the goats. And there were leaks at Clark Field, and who the hell was responsible for the leaks? The guys at Clark, the officers, would go out with the girls (unintelligible) And Pat is from Tarlac which is right there at Clark Field. Pat is a very attractive widow.

C: Her husband had been killed early on in the war.





C: You said awhile ago something about...you said should you tell me about Ceferina. Should I turn the machine off or on?

B: Yes. Better turn it off.

(LONG PAUSE IN TAPE)

C: Well, I talked with other people about Helen, they have a very different reaction, and I want to tell you what I have heard from other people. They say, I never knew Helen. I was in her house many times, but she was always in the kitchen, or she was reading a book. I never got to know anything about her. And several have described her as mouse-like, which is as different from what you have said as could be.

B: Not really. She was mouse-like when anybody was around, but I was living with her in this instance. I mean, when you are there 24 hours a day for a couple of days, you have to have a different reaction. She was meticulous in the household. Everything was beautiful. Everything was immaculate. And she didn't work. ...go in there and she would have a dust cloth over her head and she would be cleaning. And then she would take off her thing, and she would sit down and she would, and she was a person who would (unintelligible) sit down with her hands folded.

C: There's an old saying...

B: She smoked. She smoked, puff, puff, puff. But she could sit with her hands folded. (unintelligible)...but when she did say something, it was usually (unintelligible) --(sounds of dishes clattering, dog barking, hard to understand)

C: Well, do you think it was only chismas (??) that caused her and the Genral to---I guess what I am trying to say is, when she came to the Philippines was there already that deep chasm between the two of them?

B: This I don't know.

C: Well...did they seem close when you first met them or was there already



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C: the tension there?

B: There was already the tension. She was already saying things. If he made a statement, she would make a counter-statement.

C: Well, then when you started, before we began taping, you said that she was very influential. And I thought maybe you were going to tell me about positive influences...

B: No, negative.

C: Negative ones?

B: Negative. She was influential in that she was not supportive.

C: Well, I had kind of gathered that (dog barking--). Those dogs' voices record very well.

(Laughter) It's all right. It doesn't make any difference. That's just background noise. (I BEG TO DIFFER!!! Anna)

I would suspect that when Lansdale met Pat, that she was more able to talk to him about things that were \_\_\_\_\_ to him...

B: Yes, Pat...

ANOTHER VOICE SPEAKS

B: So...

(Pause)

B: (unintelligible) You see she always thought that...she was always suspicious about everything..(long story about being sick and taking medicine, and if she hadn't thrown up, Helen would never have believed that she was sick.) Now, I can't imagine kids living like this. Undoubtedly the children...if they hurt themselves, she wouldn't believe them.

C: My mother once worked for a Christian Science couple in Denver, Colorado,

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C: and she tells how one of the kids was playing in the street and fell down against the curb. and just opened a huge gash in his leg. He just bled and bled, and the mother took the child inside, washed the blood off and put a bandaid on it, and said, you're all right. And my mother was surprised at how quick the blood stopped, and half an hour later the kid was out running around.

(Long pause on tape)

C: Good morning, Colonel. (background conversation)

(Long pause on tape)

B: At one point I was telling about the two little boys and the mother said to him, little Pete said, "You don't love us. Why did you have us?" And Helen stopped for just a minute and said, "I have often wondered."

(Pause on tape)

B: And she also said, I consider myself a teacher. Not one thing... Ed told this story. I don't know whether he told it to you or not. He would take the boys out and explain to them about life and this, that and the other, and so they started asking questions about babies and how babies were born, you know. So Ed went into details about how children were conceived. And the boys just stood and looked at him and didn't say anything. And finally, one of them said, did you do that to Mother? Complete unbelief.

(Laughter)

And Ed told that story several times.

Now another thing that would happen, Ed would fly back to Manila for conferences. They were unscheduled, just take him by surprise. So one day I was...went in to Helen's and she said, oh, dear, I have just gotten a telegram that said Ed's coming. And I said, well, aren't you happy? Oh, she said, it



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B:           upsets routine. And I said, gee, I <sup>would</sup> just love to have my routine upset. And she looked at me and said, that's right, you haven't seen Bo for more than a year. And Ed had been showing up every two months or so.

(Interruption--- long pause in tape)

C:           Ok, now we are recording. (Dogs barking again)

B:           Ok, there was one occasion the boys--this was in the Vietnam period-- and Bo and Ed were over in Vietnam. Or, I don't know--maybe they were in Manila. And it was summertime and the boys were 10 and 12, I guess, or 9 and 11, something like that. And it was summertime and all the other boys were going to camp.

(Other people come in--pause in tape)

C:           Ok, you're on.

B:           Ok. ...so summertime and all the other boys in the class were talking about going to camp, looking forward to camp, discussing the different camps-- the boys and the girls--these were all from well-to-do families. So these two boys, bless their hearts, wanted to go to camp and, oh, mother, could they go to camp. And so they got the literature on various camps around in the neighborhood; you could go for one week, or two weeks, or three weeks at a time, or longer, and they were so excited, talking about what a wonderful experience it would be. And what happened in the end? Mother would be left alone in the house, and that would be a terrible thing for mother to be left alone in the house. And as a result, neither of the boys went to camp. One of them could have gone alone for two weeks and then the other one go for two weeks, but no. The boys sacrificed because mother would be left alone in house. This is sort of, you know...

I guess that's about all I have to say about...oh, and one more thing



B:       about Helen. Pete learned what it took to make his mother lose her temper. And so he would try it out. At the table, this is something else; at the table at lunchtime; these are two boys who are going to school. Junior high school age. Mother sat here; Helen sat here, Ted sat there, Pete sat there, I sat here. Four people. And the lunch would consist of a little bowl of soup, a sandwich that was cut diagonally, all the crusts trimmed off neatly, a little tiny helping of salad of some sort. In the center of the table there would be a small dish with four cookies, about this size. It was a tea party thing; it wasn't, for me, the sort of food you feed to growing boys who are going to junior high school and need nourishment. I mean, I'd. you know, put spaghetti, let them help themselves and come back and have more for seconds. They didn't have any seconds. You ate what was on the table, you cleaned up your plate, you said thank you, and then you took your plate. All right. Pete had been apparently testing this out, finding out what he could say that would make his mother lose her temper. And so one day at lunchtime, he tried it. And I had my eye on Pete, and he had a smile on his face; he knew damn well he was targeting his mother, and he said these things---what, I don't remember--he said these things, and she got furious. And that red started up her neck and right on up her face, right on up until she was just beet red. And he sat there with a smile on his face. You could see the feather hanging out of his mouth, practically. And she pounded her fist on the table; go to your room. And he didn't go right immediately, and she pounded her fist on the table again and says, go to your room. So then with a smile on his face, he went to his room. In triumph. He had accomplished what he had set out to accomplish. He tried it out, he found out what it took. And that was it; he was happy. Well, that's all I have to say about Helen. Except that, it's a damn shame, and I will repeat what I said awhile ago; everybody thought so much



B: of Ed - appreciated his attitudes, what he was trying to accomplish, what he was doing, except Helen. And it's just--maybe that's what he was crying about. I don't know, but it was just a crying shame. I felt like crying myself, because everybody else appreciated him so much, and she was living with somebody who was a rare individual, rare indeed, and yet she didn't appreciate him.

C: Could part of the problem have been just simply jealous for his time, because he was away so often and for such long periods of time--and so she resented his work because it takes him away?

B: It could be.

C: Do you have any ideas...if he had stayed in advertising, if he had gotten out of the Army in 1945 like most everyone else did, and gone back to advertising, would she have been happier, do you think?

B: I just don't know. I do not know. Maybe she's a person who enjoys being unhappy; I just don't know. I have no answers to that. But she did resent the Philippines; she resented having the Filipinos call the house any-time when he was home. When the Vietnam deal was over, when the Philippine deal was over, she resented having all these other people calling...and, I just don't know.

C: You were talking awhile ago about Chismis.

B: Yes.

C: About how some people here told her about Pat. I don't claim to be an expert on women of any age, much less those who lived in the 1940's and the 1950's, but it seemed kind of strange that one woman would walk up to another woman and say, oh, your husband is out running around with a Filipino.

B: Well, I don't know who told her. I really don't have any idea, but



B: Chismis in this country, this gossip, is a very real thing, and it can be devastating. And somebody who you think is your friend can call you and tell you these things and they think they are doing you a favor. They may be just talking around about something they heard from somebody who said something, you know, who heard from somebody else. She always acted as if she knew all about it. Who told her, I don't know.

C: How well did you know Pat?

B: Quite well.

C: ...concerning...

B: Fairly well. Fairly well. Not too well in those early years because she was mostly at Clark. But Bo knew her. I guess in one way, you are talking about disposition. I guess it depends whether you have a jealous disposition or not, in the first place. And, of course, to me I think that jealousy is one of the things that can drive people apart. If you give a guy all the rope he wants, you see, you are more likely to hang onto him than if you don't. I mean, in my opinion, I don't know. That's what I did with Bo and if I had ever tried to keep Bo on a string, I would never have hung onto him. Let's face it. Never. But I knew Pat fairly well, but mostly I knew her through Bo.

C: (unintelligible)...tell you a story...(unintelligible). Pat was gone, out of the house, and he said, with a kind of a twinkle in his eye, now, I have never asked Pat, he said, and she might not tell me if I asked her. But I always had a suspicion in those early days that she was a Huk. She seemed to know exactly where their camps were; she used to take me out in a jeep and show me the right trails to drive on, and of course, she knew Luis Taruc (unintelligible) and, of course, she had grown up in the same



C: town, then had gone to the same high school, about the same grade, maybe he was one or two grades ahead of her; and I just wondered if you had ever heard anything about that?

B: No, nothing specific. I mean, I knew that...I think I already said what I had to say about Pat, didn't I, how they met? Didn't I?

C: Yes, yes.

B: Yeah, I mean that Ed was investigating Pat to find out whether she was one of the sources of leaks from Clark Field. But the Huk part of it, I don't know about. I just never heard it discussed.

C: Amongst all the Chismis, I thought maybe that was discussed, too.  
Ok.

Reflect on Ed himself, and the kind of person he seemed to you in those early years, any stray thoughts you might have about that.

B: Well, I think I told you, not recorded, comparing Ed and Bo as people and as people who worked together. All right, so for the record: Ed was a very gentle person, severe in a way, but a gentle sort of a person, and he was a thinking person who thought and spoke and...Incidentally, he is one person who would get people together of an evening and then pull out party games--games, and these would be things to make your mind work, you know. So it was a competition but it was a fun sort of a competition. Now there aren't too many people who do that: it takes a certain kind of a mind to do that. And Ed was one of those who would bring out these party games to play. And Bo was a military man, a fighting man. He was a guy who enjoyed being back in the bush. He enjoyed the discomforts, believe it or not, of camping out and all that sort of thing. He enjoyed that. And he enjoyed fighting. And so Ed and Bo as a team; my husband was a brilliant guy, his



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B: mind also went along the same lines as Ed's. Now awhile ago somebody was saying--Oh, it was, I guess it was Emma, was saying that Ed hit people at the grassroots. I agree with everything that Emma was saying; everything that Cefi (?) was saying, as far as the quality of Ed is concerned. I think Cefi (?) expressed it beautifully. Now what was I going to say? I forgot what I was going to say.

C: Well, you were telling about the teamwork of Bo and Ed.

B: Yeah.

C: How they worked well together. You said he was a gentle man; he was also a severe person.

B: Yeah. Oh, I know what it was. Emma had been saying that Ed hit the grassroots--huh?

C: Uhn huh.

B: All right. Ed hit the grassroots, but they were the educated grassroots. It was the educated level. Bo, on the other hand, was like a pied piper. He hit the uneducated grassroots as well and tried to educate them and pull them up into another position. Now, Bo and Ed lived together here in the Philippines at JUSMAAG. Ok

SIDE 1 ENDS

SIDE 2--

B: There was a house in JUSMAAG that Bo and Ed occupied. All of the helpers were Bo's followers. I mean there weren't any...Ed didn't have anybody to reach out and get, so the cook and the houseboy and all of these people were our people from Leyte who had followed Bo wherever he went. So, the...except



B: for one person who was the cook, who Ed had found somebody next door who was a gourmandizer (?) kind of person who liked gourmet food, and this guy had cooked for him and claimed he was a good cook. So this guy was hired by Ed. These other people were hired by Bo Bohannon. Now this guy who was hired by Ed was supposed to be such a good cook, Bo said to him one day, he said, I would like to have some codfish cakes. Oh, yes, sir. So days went by; no codfish cakes. And Bo had gotten the codfish. Finally Bo started putting the pressure on him. Oh, yes, sir, we'll have codfish cakes. And Bo said, I want codfish cakes for supper tonight. Oh, yes, sir. So supper appeared and no codfish cakes. And Bo said, where the hell is the codfish cake. Oh, yes, sir, coming up. He brings in a layer cake with icing and cherries on top---and this is the codfish cake. This is when Bo and Ed nearly...(laughter)

C: That must have tasted awful.

B: Can you imagine? Yes. I can see this Filipino, just couldn't imagine why anybody would want to eat this stuff...

When I arrived, Bo said first thing, said, will you please check the grocery list and you do the grocery buying. And I looked at the grocery list. They were buying a quart of marschino (sp?) cherries each...I don't know whether it was a month or a week. It was every two weeks they did the shopping. One quart of marschino cherries...this was on the list. For some reason they wanted to put these marschino cherries in drinks, but mostly on tops of cakes. They would cover a cake with marschino cherries. It made the cake, supplied the flavor and everything else. The cake itself could be nothing, but as long as it had the cherries on it and there were all kind.. this was a tremendous list, which I was able to get under control. And once I arrived, then Bo and I

B: moved back into our own house down on Vermont (?) Street which we had built and rented while we were gone.

But Bo and Ed worked together so beautifully because Ed had Bo to back him up in the military way, I mean, and also in the mental way. They both approached their ideas in the same way. They both had the same target, the same ambitions, they knew how to draw out people, and it was a perfect team.

C: How was it that Lansdale was able to get so close to Magsaysay?

B: All right. Awhile ago, earlier on down at the dining room table, I said that when Ed and Bo met that time, Ed was wanting to go to JUSMAAG. Clarine (??) corrected me later; Ed was wanting to go to G-2. It was not JUSMAAG. I don't think there was any JUSMAAG at that time.

But I think Bo and Ed were assigned to JUSMAAG then, during Magsaysay days and worked out of JUSMAAG. Magsaysay was Secretary of Defense. Ed was G-2, and Bo was. I think he became G-2 at that time also, with G-2. And the G-2 worked with the Secretary of National Defense, and they were dealing with the Huk problem. And the suggestions, the ideas and so on, on "guerra" warfare, that had been Bo's specialty; and Ed and Bo working together on this, Ed had his own ideas and Bo had his ideas from a practical standpoint, and with the Valeriano's 7 P C T (?), they developed training programs, and they developed, oh, all kinds of things. There were training films made to teach the guys ways of getting into the Huk camps--disguise themselves as Huks and so on. And studying the Huk techniques. And it was a tremendous thing really. The Huk campaign was tremendous and the Secretary of National Defense was very much involved. So, from Secretary of National Defense then, when he became President, he kept Bo as adviser to him...he kept the



B: Office of the Secretary of National Defense to him as President. He was both President and Secretary of National Defense. And he kept the advisers that he had; namely, Ed and Bo. Ed very shortly left for Vietnam and Bo was here. And there was jealousy against Bo, for being in this position, it was such a neat position to be in, so there was jealousy. Eventually...

C: ...from the Filipines about him?

B: No, not the Filipinos; from the American side. Because Bo was so close to Magsaysay that from the American side they resented his closeness. They figured somebody else should be there now. I mean, you have been there long enough, now let me get in there, you know, and so on. We were...he was pulled out. And I don't think anybody else ever got into that close a position after that. Magsaysay was making all kinds of requests for Bo to stay, but they weren't accepted.

C: Well, did your husband go back to the States for awhile?

B: Yes.

C: Before he went...when did he go to Vietnam? Now, Lansdale arrived in Vietnam in 1954.

B: Bo was commuting. My husband was commuting between Manila and Vietnam. And I remember people would call and say, can I speak to Bo? And I would say, I'm sorry but he is not here. May I call later? Sure. And this might go on for two or three days. And maybe if I knew who the person was, I would say, well, he is out of town and he won't be back. Sometimes I wouldn't say that. I would just say, I am sorry, but he is not here. Could I take a message? But I remember one time, R.M. (??) called the house and said, hey, Dorothy, I need to talk to Bo. And I said, well, sir, he is not in the country. So it was during this period, Bo was commuting.

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C: When he was with Lansdale on his periodic trips, what was his function at that point? Why was he making these trips?

B: You mean to Vietnam? He was supportive. I don't...I didn't go over during that time. Again, it was the team of Ed and Bo working together; in other words, Ed could function better with Bo than without him. I mean, it was a second arm there that he needed.

C: Oh, I can see that, if your husband were over there on permanent assignment, but just sort of flying in and out, it seems...

B: Well, he had to keep both sides going. I mean, he needed somebody here to keep things flowing here, and Ed was put over there. Ed couldn't get back here and he wasn't needed all that much here any more. He had done his, the major part of his job. He had gotten things smoothed out and working; now it should be able to go on by itself. And Bo also was trying to leave things so it could go on by itself and he could pull out and go over to Vietnam. And then about this time also, Victor Hugo appeared on the scene. Victor was fresh out of school and Bo had said he needed a helper here. And so, I forget who it was, General somebody or other, said all right, here's a list of the men from the Academy, and he said they are all capable, but of all this list, I would suggest you pick this one: Victor Hugo. And Bo said, all right, sir, I accept your choice and would be delighted to have him. And Victor Hugo appeared out there. And so Victor was able to fill in ~~him~~ even though he was fresh, he was a brilliant, bright guy, and he was able to step in and and so Bo could go over and then Victor go over and, you know, back and forth.

C: But what exactly were they doing?

B: I don't know.

C: Let me ask another question. Did Victor Hugo really enjoy the Cao Dai



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C: religion in Vietnam when he found out he was already a God?

B: Well, that was a joke, you know.

C: I bet it was.

B: Have you met Victor Hugo?

C: No.

B: You haven't. I understand he is in Germany now. Bo had great hopes for Victor Hugo. He thought he was great.

C: You looked offended the other day when I was saying something about the CIA, about Lansdale working with the CIA, and you were... Why did it make you feel offended?

B: It didn't make me feel offended. Maybe I was just about to sneeze or cough or something. No, didn't make me feel offended--that would be the wrong word. I just want to be sure that people realize that neither Bo nor Ed were ever actually signed up by the CIA. The CIA is State Department and neither Bo nor Ed...

C: CIA isn't actually State Department. CIA is CIA.

B: All right, CIA...

C: State Department is State Department.

B: Ok. But, when they cooperate with the CIA...but if you want to work for the CIA, you have to resign from the Army, and neither Ed nor Bo could ever have retired U.S. Army if they worked for the CIA. You can cooperate with them.

C: Well, they could even work with them, Dorothy...

B: Yes...

C: ...on assignment, you see. On assignment from the Air Force.

Or on assignment from the Army. They could work for great lengths of time,

but they were still an Army officer working for the CIA, or an Air Force

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C: officer working for the CIA.

B: Right.

C: And their officer efficiency reports look so fine. I haven't seen your husband's, but I have seen all of Lansdale's. Under Freedom of Information I got them from the Air Force. And year after year his officer efficiency report says something like, engaged in vital and secret and sensitive work on behalf of the United States Government, has done an excellent job. That's it. And this is signed by somebody in the CIA, you see.

B: Yeah. Well, it's just that in this country, the CIA is maligned, also Bo was listed in that, "Who's Who in the CIA" and that was published... And Bo has spent a lot of time saying, I am not in the CIA, you see. So for that reason...sure, you work with them, you cooperate with them...I cooperated with them. I have a CIA name for that matter, but identification name, but I am not in the CIA and never have been. They had a lot of people working with them, and anybody who, you call it agent, I don't know what you call it. Anybody who worked as consultant or helping out...they get branded by the CIA. In this country, that's a dirty word, you see. So...

C: By "this country", you don't mean the United States, you mean this country...

B: ...this country, the Philippines. The CIA has become a dirty word. Just like "The Ugly American" is misunderstood. So the CIA is misunderstood. And if you read these writings by Hanares (?)---you have one sample of it-- did you Xerox the other one?

C: Yeah.

B: You did?

C: Yes.

B: That gives you a clue as to what is being published here about the



B: CIA, you see. So if you try to twist Ed into the CIA, as such, then he's a bad boy. He is one of the bad guys. And that's what I am trying to avoid, because it was genuinely and sincerely an effort to help the Philippines stand on their own feet...

C: I believe that. Then it was an effort genuinely and sincerely to stop help/Vietnam, you know, after he finished here.

B: Yes. Definitely. But they got pushed out of their, their ambition, and once the troops started moving...now. Bo and I were in Vietnam...we went back home around the world in 50--what was that, '54--when did we go back... 1953, '54, '55, Ed went to, '54, Ed went to Saigon...

C: Right.

B: ...and Bo was commuting. And Vic Hugo showed up. And then Bo's father was taken ill in '55 and I had to go back to the States. And then in '55, in December, we went back around the world. And we were over in Vietnam, in Saigon. And I had been there before. And it was such a beautiful place. There were no American troops, there were all these lovely streets and people and so on and I was in \_\_\_\_\_ and I walked into a market and I would grin at the little children, you know, and my attitude toward the Vietnamese in the marketplace was so different from the French. The French were so superior and they didn't grin at the babies, you know, and grin at the people in the marketplace. And I walked into a market and very shortly people would come up to me and say, Americana (unintelligible)...it was a different attitude. I don't know why I looked different from the French. I mean, I would walk in there with a French person and I would be spotted as an American very quickly. It was my attitude toward people. So we went back around the world

B: and went up to \_\_\_\_\_ and all that sort of thing and it was a different Saigon to the one we saw later. Now in '62 we came back to the Philippines, and Bo had retired, wrote his book, and we had retired, and Rufe Phillips sent an SOS over here in November and said, hey, Bo, we need you in Saigon. So we went over to Saigon and moved in there. Bo was commuting. Bo was under contract to Rand to do some writing on the Huks... it was the Huk situation, and he started it and documented... this was to be a documented thing. And we made arrangements to photograph the stuff at the ... held over in the \_\_\_\_\_ and this here and there and the other camps around where ever we could find it; some of it had been burned. And so I went with the photographer and I was there day after day after day, a full day shooting pictures, shooting manuscript. And then Bo started commuting and he found he couldn't write and commute and be there in both places at once. We tried to get a Filipino to carry on, and we found that he didn't know what the word "documented" meant. So we had to give up. We gave back all of the money to Rand. I don't know whether we gave back all the film to Rand. I think we sent back all the film, everything to Rand, and said, so damn sorry; I wish I could, but I can't. And I'm sorry he didn't go ahead with it because that would have been the Huk report. But Rand should have all that material on the Huks that Bo... all that documentation, it was just a tremendous amount.

Anyhow, Ed was there. There was a house--they called it the Safe House, that was a word for it--and Ed would be there, would get there maybe ten o'clock in the morning. And Ed would be there and there would already be some people around. And maybe he had been up all night writing and working on things, and he would be having 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock breakfast. He was



B: always available to people. I really can't add a hell of a lot more about Ed than agreeing so much with what Cefi (?) said and Emma said.. except I think that Bo hit the grassroots than Ed did. He, Ed, appealed to the educated grassroots

C: Well, I think (unintelligible)

B: Ed had a way of saying just the right thing at the right time. It would be a gentle thing, you know. It would be something that was fair and honest and so on. He would weigh the good and the bad and try to come up with the in between. There was something happened between Val and Bo. Val, incidentally, died of cerebral hemorrhage. It was not a heart attack. And Val, for your information, if Emma ever wants you to do a book about Val, just remember this. Val had been suffering from violent headaches. He would have temper tantrums. Things like this that would happen, it was obviously a mental, something was bothering him. And there were times when Val did things and said things that no officer would ever say (dogs barking)...against his men. And I think the guy was mentally ill. I really do (Dogs Barking).

Anyway, Val came over to the Philippines, this was about a year before he died, I think, and he announced to the people here that he was a General. And see he had the 7 P C T (?), he called them in together, and they would meet at the home of that lovely young lady, Vida Ferrante (?), and they would meet at her home. And she was friend. So they would meet there and they would talk, talk, talk. So Vida dropped by. Is he a General? How did he get to be General? Well, Bo knew damn well he wasn't a General, there was no way he could be a General. You know. In other words, he gave it to himself as a fountainpen. Well, anyhow, one day one of the men--in fact, it is this guy we are waiting for now. Maybe he has forgotten.



C: He's almost going to have to forget.

B: Yeah.

Came dashing into the house and said, Sir, if you hear that I am supposed to have hit you, just forget it, because I wouldn't do such a thing, believe me. And he is Uncle Bo, Uncle Bo. He said, I would never do such a thing. But you can ask a dozen people here in the Philippines that Ed Navarro heard of it, so many people who knew Bo knows this, that Val ordered a hit on Bo. And I presume the reason would be because he knew damn well that Bohannon would know that he was not a General. And I suppose Bo would be the only person in the Philippines that he knew about that would say no way Val would be a General. I presume that's it.

Now, I wrote to Ed one time--I have written to people saying I wanted them gathering anecdotes about Bo. And I said, do you know any anecdotes, and I have gotten all sorts of things. My husband was a real character, really. A terrific sense of humor, and a real character. And so I wrote to Ed one time, I said, did you ever hear about a hit being put out against Bo. Ed wrote back and he said, Dorothy, you must always think of Val as being Bo's closest friend, a person who would have died for him and so on and so on all in this vein; don't ever think anything different. Well, I wrote...the anecdote....I wrote back to Ed, I said, this was not...I had no way of thinking of this as an anecdote. I said there is a line drawn at a certain point. I said, I would in no way include this as an anecdote. I was just asking whether you had ever heard of it. I mean I wouldn't put that...I think Val was mentally off from time to time. Probably there was a hemorrhage or what; I don't know. But he died of cerebral hemorrhage. He spoke of...now, Justiniana, now Ed would tell you that he didn't put Justi's (?) name on because there had been



B: something against Justi (?) in Saigon. Well, Val had made accusations against Justiniana in Saigon, that Justi had been absconding with money and so on and so on, and that the CIA was investigating him. And Justi came to Bo terribly upset. Uncle Bo, what is this--I don't know anything about it. And he said, I went to the CIA and I said, what is this; I'm told that I am being investigated for absconding with money. He said, I haven't been handling any money. What money? What do you have...please tell me what it is you have against me. They said, we don't have anything. We don't know what you are talking about. We don't know. Now, I don't know whether Ed has some other story on this, but the story that we get was that, again, Val making accusations against people under him. I don't know. And this is why Justi wasn't included on your list. Because...Emma told me, that Justi was not included on the list because Ed knew that something had happened in Saigon and he didn't consider Justi reliable. I told you, Justi's a romantic.

C: Well, he wasn't included on the list because it was a hasty list. In the last 15 minutes that I was at the General's, I said hey, who are some people I should talk to in the Philippines. He started scratching his head... you know it was a very quick sort of a listing.

B: Well, Emma had said...Emma told me before you, well, you weren't here, maybe on the phone, that Justi was not included because ...

C: Well, I am very glad you did include...

B: Well, I think he's a character. I really do. I think all of these guys helped a lot. I'm just so sorry \_\_\_\_\_ hasn't shown up because he'd... Do you have another appointment with your...

(background conversation away from microphone about your books)



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B: I'm not much of a contribution when it comes to Ed, because as I say, you know, I was just a fly on the wall. And Bo and Ed worked so close together. And you were asking what were they really trying to do in Vietnam. They were trying to do the same sort of thing they were doing here. They were contacting Diem; they had wonderful rapport with Diem. Wonderful rapport with Diem. And they had an in to the palace. Ed could go in and...he could do things that other people couldn't do.

(LONG PAUSE ON TAPE)

C: Well, I'm going to try once again to get hold of Pat Perez (?) and then I guess I'll call a taxi and head back down.

You have the most interesting circle of acquaintances, Dorothy.

B: Yes. Fascinating.

You know, this is a great country to live in at my age and with my background here and the number of friends we have here, because (unintelligible) and people get together and people drop in (unintelligible).

END OF TAPE



In view of the historical value of this interview, I DOROTHY BOHANNAN  
knowingly and voluntarily permit Cecil B. Currey the full use of this  
information for whatever uses it may have, including eventual deposit of  
this interview tape in a suitable research library.

Dorothy Bohannon  
Date: 7/27/85

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